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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JAN 22 1990

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Allen, Walter Granville, House

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 8504 Macon Road

N/A not for publication

city, town Cordova

N/A vicinity

state Tennessee

code TN

county Shelby

code 157

zip code 38018

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Entered in the
National Register

Alvina Byers

2/23/90

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)COMMERCE/TRADE - professional

7. Description

Architectural Classification**(enter categories from instructions)**Other: American Foursquare/Colonial Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)foundation STUCCOwalls WOOD/weatherboard

roof ASPHALTother CONCRETE

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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Section number 7 Page 2

Allen, Walter Granville, House

Located approximately one-quarter mile from the small commercial center and railhead of the unincorporated community of Cordova, TN (pop. 851, 1980), the Walter Granville Allen House was built in circa 1913-14 as a modified four-square residence in the Colonial Revival style. The property is oriented facing south to the line of Macon Road and the Louisville and Nashville Railroad nearby, which are the two major historic transportation routes that served the community and its system of surrounding cotton plantations.

The residence is unusual as an example of a high-styled twentieth century residence within the surrounding rural, agrarian context. The form of the structure is essentially that of a four-square, with two additional bays to one side set back from the main building line. The additional bays provide the floor plan with the luxury of space for a wider hall and additional rooms, which greatly magnifies the grandeur of the "public" interior spaces as well as the impact of structural mass visible from the street.

The structure is situated atop a low terrace above the level of Macon Road and is surrounded with remnants of its original landscaping, which include mature red oaks, pecan and cedar trees. Secondary growths of maple, dogwood and cedar have appeared on the site within the past three decades. Though a few original garden plantings are evident, their arrangement, plan and plant materials have been lost due to many years of overgrowth.

The two-story frame house is a fine representative of the design, materials and construction techniques available in its day. Its low-pitched complex hip roof is covered with asphalt shingles and features three hip dormers containing a pair of six-light casement lights each. The wide projecting box cornice is paneled with bead board. Exterior walls are clad with a wide weatherboard siding; the foundation is poured concrete covered with a layer of pebble-texture stucco.

The front (southern) facade is dominated by its deep L-shaped porch, which is covered with a hip roof. The porch is supported by cast concrete columns, which are detailed with Roman Ionic capitals and fluted shafts

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Allen, Walter Granville, House

raised on paneled pedestal bases. Above the porch in the inset bay area is a small sun porch, glassed with a continuous run of four, six-over-one double-hung sashes. All other windows of the front facade are six-over-one double-hung sashes. The entrance appears at center, and features a multi-light double-door topped with a full, thirteen-light transom and flanked with three-quarter length ten-light sidelights.

The side (western and eastern) facades of the structure are simply detailed, save for the wide bay window featured on the western facade-- a feature serving the dining room. Windows used on the side facades are one-over-one double-hung sash lights.

The rear (northern facade) of the structure features an attached, one-story kitchen wing, which originally had an open porch contained under the overhang of the gable roof along its eastern side. The porch was enclosed in circa 1955 with weatherboard siding; new six-over-one replacement windows were installed in the remaining openings during the recent rehabilitation of the structure.

The interior of the structure is a fine example of the open-space floor planning popular in the years following the turn of the twentieth century. The traditional four-square plan has an internal, multi-run enclosed stair. In the W. G. Allen House, however, the additional two bays in width allowed by the modification of the four-square form allows for a wide central entrance hall of greater formality, with an open stairway placed at the end of the hall. The rooms of the western side of the house flow from one to another and connect with the hall with little restriction, while the rooms to the east belie their use and are more private.

The entrance hall is light and airy in character due to the multi-light door, transom and sidelights, the side multi-light door to the porch, and the bank of windows that light the landing of the open stairway. Immediately to the left upon entering the structure is a wide opening to the living room, formed by columns raised on paneled

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Allen, Walter Granville, House

bases and detailed with Roman Ionic capitals on Tuscan shafts. The columns support an architrave and frieze. Beyond the opening to the living room are a pair of multi-light doors opening to the dining room, surrounded by a simple surround topped with a frieze. The stairway is composed of three runs with a second landing that spans the width of the hall. The stairway is restrained in design, made up of paneled newels and block spindle balusters. A wide opening beneath the stairway leads to the back porch area, which has been enclosed for additional usable space. Near the first landing of the stairway is a fine Colonial Revival fireplace, with a paneled cornice and frieze supported by fluted columns with Ionic capitals.

The living room to the west of the hall is dominated by its large fireplace/bookcase. The red gum mantle is detailed with large scroll brackets with acanthuses. The flanking red gum bookcases are simply detailed with a lining of beadboard paneling and multi-light doors. The northern wall of the room contains a pair of two-panel double-doors leading to the dining room, set within a simple surround topped by a frieze. The doors retain their original hidden push-button locksets; indeed, all doors and windows throughout the home retain their original hardware.

The dining room is the only major room of the first floor without a fireplace; it was heated solely by the early central forced air system of the house. Though all rooms of the house are serviced by this heating system, only two are without fireplaces. This fact perhaps reveals the survival of fireplaces as important decorative room features even though their service for heating was not critical to the livability of the house. The ducts and Gothic-styled decorative vents of the system were retained in the rehabilitation of the central heating and air conditioning system. The dining room features few details other than the shallow bay window along the western wall. Behind the dining room to the north is the butler's pantry with the glass-front doors of the china and linen storage. Beyond it is the kitchen area, which retains none of its original features save for window and door trim. One door in the kitchen leads to the half-basement lined with a poured-in-place concrete foundation and floor. Another door leads to the enclosed rear porch area.

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Allen, Walter Granville, House

The eastern side of the structure contains a two-room servant's quarters or office area off of the central hall, through a simple two-panel door topped by a four-light transom. Unlike the other rooms of the first floor, these are very private in character. The front room of the two contains a fireplace with a Mission-style mantle and over-mantle and its original flow-glazed tile surround. A multi-light double-door topped by a four-light transom leads to the porch. A simple two-panel door connects the front and back rooms; the back room is connected to the back porch area by a simple two-panel door.

The upper floor of the W. G. Allen House contains only three bedrooms. A wide central hall divides the bedrooms. The front, southwestern bedroom contains an oak mantle and over-mantle with a full architrave supported by two-tiers of columns with Tuscan shafts and Ionic capitals. The northwestern bedroom contains no mantle. Each bedroom is outfitted with a small closet. The eastern side of the upper floor contains the master bedroom with its rear dressing room area. The bedroom contains a fine oak mantle and over-mantle with an oval mirror and columns with Tuscan shafts and Ionic capitals. The master bedroom is provided access to the small sleeping porch through a two-panel door; a multi-light door also connects the hall with the sleeping porch.

Above the bedrooms of the second floor is an unfinished attic reached by an enclosed run of stairs from the second floor landing. The attic is floored for storage.

The structure is surrounded by gently rolling meadows that were once part of much larger farmland holdings of the Allen family. Recently, the open land surrounding the structure was subdivided for future development. As a result, a circa 1915-20 barn located several hundred feet to the rear of the house and a circa 1950-55 storage building beside the western yard are no longer associated with the property and have not been included within this nomination. No other associated outbuildings are extant. No others are known to have existed.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce
Architecture

Period of Significance

circa 1914-1917

Significant Dates

circa 1914-17

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Allen, Walter Granville

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property Less than one acre

UTM References

A

1	6
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2	4	6	8	6	0
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3	8	9	3	7	0	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Ellendale, TN 409NE

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary is shown on the accompanying Shelby County tax map.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary for the nomination of the Walter Granville Allen House contains only the portion of the house lot still associated with the structure and retaining significant integrity.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title John Linn Hopkins date November 4, 1989
 organization Preservation consultant telephone (901) 278-5186
 street & number 974 Philadelphia Street state TN zip code 38104
 city or town Memphis

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Allen, Walter Granville, House

The Walter Granville Allen House is significant under National Register criterion B for its association with Allen, a prominent planter, banker, businessman and political leader in Shelby County and the Cordova area in particular in the decades surrounding the turn of the twentieth century. Under criterion C in the area of architecture, the house is a good example of an upper-class residence in the Colonial Revival style, notable for its modified four-square form and well-preserved open floorplan characteristics.

The grandparents of W. G. Allen, Thomas Allen and Betsy Ecklin Allen, first came to West Tennessee in 1835 from North Carolina in the company of Betsy's two brothers, Joshua and Robert Ecklin, and their sister Sabrina Ecklin and her husband William Patrick. The families all settled in the area now known as Cordova and established a vast network of plantations centering on Macon Road, a significant early roadway connecting Memphis with the Stage Road, later known as the Memphis and Somerville Turnpike (U. S. 64).

The second generation of the Allen family, including sons William, Walter and Thomas, expanded and improved the family's importance to the agricultural development of the area in the antebellum era. By 1860, the holdings of the Allen families alone totaled 15,000 acres of rich cotton-producing plantation lands, making them a significant force in the social, cultural and economic development of the area. Within this setting of family prominence in plantation agriculture, Walter Granville Allen was born in 1851 to Walter and Mary Parr Allen.

Though raised in the context of the management of large cotton plantation holdings, W. G. Allen was introduced to local commerce as an early teenager as a clerk in the small commissary of James Allen (no relation), who had established the area's first commercial enterprise. W. G. Allen purchased the business from James Allen in circa 1875, and began the expansion of the area's commercial interests. Prior to this time, the focus of the area had centered at Green Bottom and Morning Sun, small communities on the Memphis and Somerville Turnpike. With the establishment of significant commercial activity in the Cordova area, the small community was given the name "Allentown" in circa 1875.

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As was common in rural Tennessee in the nineteenth century, small satellite communities developed as retail and service centers for the plantation interests that surrounded them. Most were established at crossings of principal local transportation routes, whether river or road. While some grew to become substantial communities, most remained modest centers for the provision of fundamental services and supplies for their agricultural customers. Allentown was one such example, not unlike neighboring communities like Lucy, Woodstock, Morning Sun, Bartlett and Germantown-- each separated by the equivalent of a day's ride by horseback. Though small in size, these tiny communities provided critical services to the plantation areas around them. Aside from basic retail provisions, these communities were often the sites for the establishment of cotton gins, saw mills, grist mills and other similar enterprises-- seasonal services employed by planters large and small as economical alternatives to establishing their own gins and mills as a part of their farming operation.

W. G. Allen contributed to the expansion of commercial interests in the area of Allentown (now Cordova) with the establishment of its first commercial gin and saw mill in circa 1880. The Macon Road was one of only two established transportation routes crossing the Wolf River on its way to the river landing at Memphis (the other was the bridge at Raleigh), making Allen's Gin and General Store a natural focus for commercial activity serving its surrounding plantations. It comes as no surprise, then, that the Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railroad (later Louisville and Nashville Railroad) was to develop its first line between Nashville and Memphis through this rich plantation area in 1888. The railroad renamed the community "Dexter".

W. G. Allen married Augusta Allen in 1881 and took up housekeeping in a log home on the site of the current residence in the following year, less than 200 yards from his store. As the business and agricultural fortunes of Allen increased, he began to involve himself in politics, first as a Justice of the Peace for the Dexter community, and later as a member of the Shelby County Court during the last two decades of the nineteenth century, including a term as its Chairman. From 1890 to 1910, Allen was

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closely involved with the effort to establishment of a new courthouse for Shelby County. The effort included the selection of James Gamble Rogers to design the structure, which opened to the public in March of 1910 (Part Adams Avenue Historic District, NR 11/25/1980). Allen used his reputation established in business, agriculture and politics to springboard his election to the Tennessee state legislature for two terms, the 51st and 52nd General Assemblies from 1899 to 1903. Though not a Memphian, Allen helped to champion state legislation as a member of the Shelby County delegation which promoted the establishment of the Memphis Park Commission and enabled the Memphis Annexation of 1899. It was during Allen's state service that the community was renamed "Cordova", in part to avoid confusion with the town of Dexter, Kentucky. Shortly thereafter, Allen established the Cordova Bank and Trust Co., serving as its first president from its inception for the rest of his life.

Allen's Cordova home was struck by fire in 1913 and completely destroyed. The existing structure was built to replace it in the late months of 1913 and early months of 1914. Unfortunately, Allen was not afforded the opportunity to enjoy his new home for very long. He died suddenly in 1917 at age sixty-six.

In the years that followed Allen's death, the home was maintained by his wife until her death in circa 1945. Mrs. Allen was familiar as the community's school teacher for many years, first in the small log school located across Macon Road from the Allen home, and later in the Cordova Elementary School, established in 1913.

Though the structure represents a period late in the life of W. G. Allen, his stature and influence as a leader in business and politics in eastern Shelby County was still significant, even at the time of his death. His home is the only residential structure standing associated with his accomplishments and his status within the surrounding region. The Allen Store and the Cordova Bank and Trust building remain to indicate Allen's business interests, but neither retain sufficient integrity for listing as individual structures.

From the point of view of architectural significance,

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the W. G. Allen House may be the only formally-designed residence in the Cordova community that retains historic design integrity to the present. Other residences in the area that may have possessed architectural significance have been demolished or have been so altered to have lost integrity. Most surrounding residences today are contemporary suburban ranch houses, thus indicating the influence of rapid suburbanization occurring in Cordova and its vicinity. In this way, the structure remains as a lasting landmark to the contributions of W. G. Allen to the history of the Cordova community and to Shelby County at large.

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9. Major Bibliographic References

Brough, Augusta Hooper. "History of Cordova". Prepared for the Cordova Community Fair of September 11, 1952. (Memphis and Shelby County Public Library and Information Center).

McBride, Robert M., ed. Biographical Directory of the Tennessee General Assembly. Nashville: Tennessee State Library and Archives, 1979, Vol. II, pp.15.

Memphis Civic Affairs. "Souvenir Courthouse Edition". March, 1910. (Memphis Room, Memphis and Shelby County Public Library and Information Center).

Memphis Press-Scimitar. March 5, 1917, pp. 16.

Rogers, Norma. "Allen House". A narrative history prepared for Geoff Sutton, May, 1989.

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Allen, Walter Granville, House
8504 Macon Road
Cordova, Shelby County Tennessee
Photo by: Gerald Smith
Date: August 1989
Neg: Tennessee Historical Commission
Nashville, Tennessee

View of the front (western) facade and part of the northern (side) facade,
facing generally northeast
#1 of 16

View of the rear (eastern) facade and rear kitchen wing, facing generally
west
#2 of 16

View of the side (southern) facade and part of the front (western) facade,
facing generally north
#3 of 16

View of the central entrance hall from the principal entrance, with the
stair and entrance to rear ell at center, the living room at left and
the sitting room/office at right
#4 of 16

View of the living room from the central hall, with the dining room beyond
#5 of 16

View of the central hall and sitting room beyond from the living room, with
the principal entrance at the far right and the secondary entrance at
the center right
#6 of 16

View of the dining room with the central hall and stair beyond and the
living room at the right
#7 of 16

View of the dining room and its bay window from the central hall with the
door to the butler's pantry at the right
#8 of 16

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View from the dining room to the butler's pantry, with the kitchen beyond
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View of the kitchen, with the door to the butler's pantry at left
#10 of 16

View of the enclosed rear porch, with the central hall and principal
entrance beyond
#11 of 16

View of the sitting room/office, with the door to the porch at the left and
the central hall beyond
#12 of 16

View of the sitting room/office and the rear bedroom beyond
#13 of 16

View of the upstairs hall, with the door to the master bedroom at the right
#14 of 16

View of the northwestern upstairs bedroom
#15 of 16

View of the master bedroom, with the door to the sleeping porch at center
left and the door to the hall at center right
#16 of 16